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TANDING BY

By OLIVER P. PARKER

Author of
CLAIM ALLOWED



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STANDING BY

By OLIVER P. PARKER

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AUTHOR OF

CLAIM ALLOWED
THE WINNING OF LATANE
THE CALL OF THE FLAG
BETTER THAN GOLD
THE VALEDICTORY
LONE STAR
ETC.

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THE NATIONAL DRAMA CO.,

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MAR 22 1919

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STANDING BY

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Mr. Carey—A soldier's friend.
Ethelind—Doing her father's will.
Mrs. Carey—With a different view.
Max Martin—Mrs. Carey's choice.
Dr. Brighton—A friend of the family.
Mrs. Oakley—A friend of the orphans.
Mrs. Walton—A mother of a soldier.
Rosa Walton—Of the Great Red Cross.
Bobby Walton—A follower of the flag.
Aunt Polly—Black face and tender heart.
Henry—"Wid de Expulsion fo'ces."
Time to Play—Two hours.

ACT I.

SCENE—Well furnished room in the home of the Careys in Richmond. Early spring of 1919. Mr. Carey seated center by small table reading paper.

POLLY—(L. With basket or bundle.) Well, well, Massar Carey, I's glad ter see you sittin' up agin. Feelin' all rat, is you?

MR. CAREY—O yes, Polly, I think I am much better. What are you cooking today that is good?

POLLY—Now I knows you is better. What you cravin'?

MR. C.—Something with a kick to it.

POLLY—I caint do nuffin' fur you 'long dat line, Massar Carey. Case dat kickin' stuff am gittin' powerful scace. But er cose, ef I had the price.....

MR. C.—I am talking about something to eat.

POLLY—Shucks! I thot you had somepin else in mind. I thut you wanted to stick yo' nose in er ole fashion julep.

MR. C.—No. I would be satisfied with a square meal.

POLLY—If you'l fire dat nuss I'll fixe dat appetite.

MR. C.—She is going to France pretty soon.

POLLY—Dat reminds me. I got a letter dis mawnin' fum date France, en I wanted to git her to read it to me.

MR. C.—I will read it for you.

POLLY—(Gives him a letter.) Thank you sah. (Sits L.)

MR. C.—(Reads, imitating negro.) "Wid de Ameri-

can Expulsion fo'ces. (Read date to make 60 days.)" You should feel flattered, Polly. This letter has reached you in sixty days.

POLLY—Yassar. Dey's all censored bout lack dat.

MR. C.—(Reading.) "My dear Mademoiselle"——

POLLY—Dat letter ain't to me.

MR. C.—O yes it is. That is French.

POLLY—(Weeping.) You needn't read no mo', Massar Carey. Dat's jes' er letter fum one er dem Frenchmens tellin' me dat mah boy am dade. And he's away out dar in dat No Man's Lan' by heseef, and I didn't get to go to de fun'l.

MR. C.—O no, Polly. It is from Henry. He just wants to let you know that he knows some French.

POLLY—(Fimly.) Dat nigger better lay off'n dat French; or he'll say somepin dat'll git him in geuard house.

MR. C.—Let's see how he gets along with it. "Well, Mammy"——

POLLY—Now dat's United States, and it ain't so distressin'. I'll listen to dat.

MR. C.—"Well, Mammy, I takes de time endurin' dis lull in de scrappin' to written you dat I has been able so fur to keep my name off'n de cazallity list, en I hopes you de same. Well, Mammy, Wash want hut much, but he lef de hawspital wid a game leg dat uncompliments him so he couldn't run fas' enuf to keep contac wid de enemy; and so he wus put to cookin' fur us."

POLLY—COOKIN'? Why, dat nigger 'l kill de las one of 'm.

MR. C.—I though all of your boys were good cooks.

POLLY—Dat'n ain't. He caint bile er egg. If I had a knowed dat dey wus a needin' a good I'd er gone myself.

MR. C.—If you were cooking for them they wouldn't want to do anything but eat.

POLLY—(Pleased.) Thank you, sah. I reggin I don't play second fiddle when it comes to cookin'. You know some big man done said dat a army travels on its stomach.

MR. C.—That was Napoleon.

POLLY—Well, now, Massar Carey, if dat American Army was travelin' on a stummick full of MY cookin', dar wouldn't be no way to stop 'm, 'ceptin' to kill de cook. What else do he say?

MR. C.—"Well, Mammy, dat cookin' of Wash's was too hard on our morality, and it was beginnin' to show in the cazallity list; and so he was transferred, and now he is cookin' for de prisoners we takes. And de Cap'n say he is much more effective wid a skillet den he ever was wid a bayonet, anyhow. Well, Mammy, you tell Pahson Jenkins dat I has been out in dat No Man's Lan', and I fully agrees wid him dat it am more blessed to give den to receive. Ce, est, ce, la, pas"—— I don't know what he means by that.

POLLY—He don't, nuther. Jes' skip it.

MR. C.—“Well, Mammy, how is you rheumatiz, and all de res’ of de folks. Tell Lucindy howdy for me, en tell her she gwine to be my objective when I gits back. Aurevoir.”

POLLY—What’s dat?

MR. C.—That is the end of the letter. (Gives it.)

POLLY—Thank you, sah. Jes’ lemme know what you wants to eat, and I’ll fix it for you.

MR. C.—When we get rid of the doctor and nurse I will come down to the kitchen and give you a special order.

POLLY—(Going L.) I’ll do de bes’ I kin’ for you.

MR. C.—You are forgetting your bundle.

POLLY—(Coming back.) Dat’s dem li’l Orphans cloves what I been ironin’ fer de RED Cross. Miss Ethel-ind said she’d sen’ ’m down for me.

MR. C.—Just leave them here and I will call her attention to them when she comes in.

POLLY—And tell her ef she got any mo’ jes’ to lemme know. I’s powerful sorry for dem li’l fellers and I is willin’ to hep ’m out all I kin.

MR. C.—Would you like to adopt one of them?

POLLY—I sho’ would, but I jes’ natchully ain’t got de money.

ROSA—(R.) Mrs. Oakley has called to see you. Do you feel like talking to her?

MR. C.—Why, yes. Let her come in. (Ex. Rosa R.) Polly, tell Mrs. Carey Mrs. Oakley is here.

POLLY—She haven’t come back yet. (Ex. P. L.)

MRS. OAKLEY—(R. with Rosa.) Why, Mr. Carey, you don’t look like a sick man.

MR. C.—I don’t feel very much like one. Mrs. Oakley, meet my nurse, Miss Walton.

MRS. O.—Well, well, Rosa Walton. I didn’t recognize you. How are you, dear?

ROSA—Just fine, thank you.

MRS. O.—How long have you been a nurse?

ROSA—This is my first case.

MRS. O.—Is she a good nurse, Mr. Carey?

MR. C.—The best I ever had.

MRS. O.—Is he a good patient, Rosa?

ROSA—(Laugh.) The best I ever had.

MRS. O.—Do you expect to go over seas?

ROSA—Just as soon as they will take me. And I hope I get there in time to nurse Bobby.

MRS. O.—It would be a great comfort to him to have you with him. I wish I could go and be a part of that great mother heart that is loving and caring for my boy. I don’t see how I could stand to have him so far away from me if I did not know that he is sheltered by the wings of the great Red Cross.

MR. C.—Have you heard from Charles lately?

MRS. O.—I had a letter today stating that he will recover, and that he will not be maimed; and to show my gratitude I have set myself the task of providing

for ten little War Orphans. I have placed seven already, and have but these three left. (Shows photos.) Two boys and a girl.

MR. C.—(Looking at photos.) They are fine little fellows, aren't they? (Polly comes up and looks.)

MRS. O.—Yes. In spite of their rags and hunger they all have smiling faces. How do you account for that?

MR. C.—I don't know, I am sure. It may be that God lights their faces with a smile that we may better see their lonely hearts. How do you like them, Polly? (Gives photos.)

POLLY—Bress dey li'l broken hearts, dey is smilin'. Miss Oakley, dat smile is de good Lawd's wuk. He puts dat bright light in dey li'l faces so's we can fin' 'm. En I don't see whut de peoples thinkin' 'bout to let 'm starve. Don't de good book say fur us to feed de li'l fellers fust?

MRS. O.—It doesn't say exactly that, does it?

POLLY—Now, look heah, Miss Oakley. I don't believe you is a Bible student. Don't de good book say when you sees a li'l feller hongry en thirsty en naked, you'd better git busy en hep 'm out?

ROSA—"In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these——"

POLLY—You's got it, honey. "DE LEAST ER DESE." Dat's dese War Orphans. Dey's hongry en naked en thirsty, en we knews it. De Good Lawd gwine to make it almighty hot for de folks what passes dese chil'n by.

MR. C.—You have a convincing argument, Polly. Why don't you go out and tell others about it?

POLLY—Dat's what de matter now, Massar Carey. Dey's too many folks tellin' somebody else what to do, en dey never does nuffin' deysef. I'd ruther git behin' one er dese li'l fellers and see her thu.

MR. C.—All right. Take your choice. I will pay for it.

POLLY—Thank YOU. I'll take de li'l girl.

MR. C.—You may keep her picture. I will take the other two, Mrs. Oakley.

MRS. O.—I thought you had one already.

MR. C.—I have; but Polly may be right about this light in their faces. If they are brave enough to face their awful future with a smile, I think we ought to help they all we can.

MRS. O.—You are going to give until its hurts, aren't you?

MR. C.—No. I am going to give until it quits hurting.

MRS. O.—That is a better slogan, and I think I shall use it in the future. (Rising.) Goodby. I am glad to see you getting well again.

MR. C.—Goodby. I am glad you came in. (Ex. Mrs. O.—R.)

POLLY—I sho' is proud of dis li'l pictur.

ROSA—I may see your orphan when I get to France.

POLLY—If you do jes' tell her dat ole Black Mammy

gwine ter stan' rat by her side, whilst you is takin' care of de American soldiers.

MR. C.—Why do you say American soldiers? Don't you want to see all of the soldiers cared for?

POLLY—Well, I didn't mean to 'sclude de Allies, er cose; but I's intrusted in our own boys fust. When you gits thu wid dem, den you can fix up de Allies.

ROSA—And then what?

POLLY—Take de fust boat fur home.

ROSA—But suppose there are some German soldiers to be care for. Would you let them die?

POLLY—Honey I wouldn't frustrate no German plans. If he wants to die dat's his business.

MR. C.—But the Red Cross relieves suffering wherever it finds it.

POLLY—Den let 'm go up in dem Flanders Fields, and all round whar dem German soldiers has been, and dey'l fine plenty to do widout wasten dey time foolishly.

ROSA—I am afraid you are forgetting that pretty Bible quotation you mentioned a moment ago.

POLLY—No, I ain't I sticks to my Bible. And if you'l read dat flotation^a right you'l fine dat it supposes my argument.

ROSA—Let me see. The Bible says, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these"—see, it says the LEAST of these.

POLLY—Well, you mought twist dat roun't to mean de Germans; for de Good Lawd knows deys li'l enuf, But go on wid de rest of it.

ROSA—"The least of these, my brethren——"

POLLY—Da you is. "MY BRETHERN." Dat lets 'm out. Dey ain't no brethren of mine.

MR. C.—But this is the good Lord talking, Polly.

POLLY—Well, you may be right, but nobody but de good Lawd could feel dat way tow'ds 'm.

ROSA—Now, Polly, if you were a Red Cross nurse and you found a German soldier in a dying condition you would do what you could for him, wouldn't you?

POLLY—O yassam. Ef I found one tryin' to die I'd hep 'm out all I could. (Ex. L. Door bell R.)

MR. C.—See who that is, please.

ROSA—(Admits Mrs. Walton. R.) Why, it is mother. (Kisses her.) What are you doing in the city?

MRS WALTON—I came to see your patient and to bring him some of his favorite flowers.

MR. C.—(Taking flowers.) O thank you, Mattie. I have been wishing for some of these flowers. They are from the old bush on the left side of the gate as you come out.

MRS. W.—Yes, it is in full bloom now, and very pretty.

MR. C.—I wish I could see it. Put them in water, Rosa, so they will stay fresh. (Ex. R.—L.)

MRS. W.—You won't ever forget the farm, will you?

Mr. C.—Forget it! Why, it grows dearer to me every day. I was thinking of the old place just before you came it.

MRS. W.—(Smiling.) Were you thinking of the farm or the balance Bobby owes you on it.

Mr. C.—I am not worrying about that. Whether I live or die, Bobby will have all the time he needs to pay that. I was just thinking how I would enjoy a visit out there.

MRS. W.—Can't you persuade Mrs. Carey to bring you out? I would be glad to have you come and stay as long as you wish. It might be good for you to get out in the country and rough it for a while.

Mr. C.—Mattie, would it greatly inconvenience you if we should accept this kind invite?

MRS. W.—Not in the least. I have plenty of room and would be delighted to have you come out and keep me company while Bobby and Rosa are away. I will make home-folks of you and let you stay as long as you wish.

Mr. C.—And would you let me help you manage the farm?

MRS. W.—You do not know how much help that would be to me.

Mr. C.—Well, I am going to find out; for we are coming if the Doctor will agree. When Bobby went to France I promised him I would look after you, and I am afraid I have not done that as I should; but if I get out there I will redeem myself. By the way, have you heard anything further from Bobby?

MRS. C.—His nurse wrote me that he is able to sit up, but thinks he will have to undergo another operation before he is able to sail. Of course I don't know what that means, but I am hoping he will soon be able to come home.

Mr. C.—I hope so, too, for his sake and yours. And until he comes back I want you to let me know if there is anything I can do for him.

MRS. W.—Thank you very much. He told me when he left to come to you if I needed advice; and that is why I came today. It is in regard to the farm he bought just before he enlisted.

Mr. C.—O yes. The Gerst place. I advised him to buy that. What is the trouble?

MRS. W.—It is rumored in our community that the Mrs. Gerst from whom he bought the place is a German subject, and that she sold the property to evade the law.

Mr. C.—Nonsense. I know Mrs. Gerst and I believe she is a loyal American. Her husband was a citizen of the United States and a good one at that. He was my friend. And if I am not mistaken their son is in the American army.

MRS. W.—I am sure there is some mistake somewhere; but she went away after she sold the farm and I did not know how to get at the truth of the matter. Of

course I would hate for anything of this kind to come up to mar the happiness of Bobby's home coming.

MR. C.—Well now, you need not worry about that. I will have my lawyer look into the matter and take such steps as he may think necessary.

MRS. W.—You do not anticipate any trouble, do you?

MR. C.—O, not a bit. But if it proves to be alien property it should be reported to the custodian, and Bobby would be called upon to explain his connection with it. I do not believe this will be necessary; for I am sure everything will be found quite proper.

MRS. W.—I do hope so, for it would hurt my boy to have his patriotism doubted in the least.

MR. C.—Don't you worry about that. The people know that any boy who would waive his rightful exemptions and sacrifice his own interests, as your boy did, to go out and fight and all but die for his country, loves it out of the purest patriotism, and could never be guilty of shielding an enemy.

MRS. W.—O, I know he is not guilty of anything like that; but it would be so humiliating to have to disprove such a charge.

MR. C.—You leave it all with me, Mattie; and do not let Bobby know anything about it. Everything will be all right, I assure you.

MRS. W.—Thank you so much. I hope it won't be very much trouble to you.

MR. C.—It won't be any trouble at all. It will be a great pleasure indeed to protect the interest and good name of an absent American soldier. Especially when that soldier's father was the best friend I ever had.

MRS. W.—I know Bobby will appreciate anything you may do for him, and I assure you it is a great comfort to me to know that his interests will be in your hands. (Rising.) Goodby. If you decide to come out to the farm you will find a hearty welcome.

MR. C.—I am coming if it can be arranged.

ROSA—(L. With flowers in vase, and glass of medicine.) Are you going, mother?

MRS. W.—Yes. Goodby. I will see you before you sail.

ROSA—Goodby. (Ex. Mrs. W.—R. Rosa sets vase on table.) How is that?

MR. C.—The flowers are very sweet, but I am not so sure about the stuff in that glass.

ROSA—(Giving glass.) O, it isn't so bad.

MR. C.—(Drinks and frowns.) Br-r-r-r! No, that is fine.

ROSA—(Taking glass.) Will you have another one?

MR. C.—I will not.

DR. BRIGHTON—(Right.) Hello.

MR. C.—Come in, William.

DR. B.—How is our patient today, Rosa?

ROSA—O, I think he is much better. He complains at taking his medicine.

DR. B.—(Sitting and feeling pulse.) That is a good sign. (To Mr. C.) Feeling better today, aren't you?

MR. C.—Yes, and I want to get out of here.

DR. B.—I see no reason why you shouldn't, provided you take care of yourself. (Ex. R.—L.) What you need now is plenty of good air and sunshine. If you could go some place where it is quiet and restful and forget about business you would feel like a different man.

MR. C.—By George, that is what I wanted you to say. Mrs. Walton has just been here, and she invited me to come out and help her run the farm. It is exactly what I would like to do.

DR. B.—That is your old home place, isn't it?

MR. C.—Yes, and the only place on earth that really seems like home to me. When Ethelind's mother died I left it and came to the city, but I have always regarded it as home sweet home.

DR. B.—That is the very place for you to go. And I advise you to make the change. Take as much interest in the farm management as you feel able to do without overtaxing your strength. Dr. Foster is still out there, and knows you better perhaps than I do. Just follow his advice and drink plenty of good buttermilk and you will make it fine.

MR. C.—I feel better already.

DR. B.—I will run out occasionally and see how you are.

MR. C.—I thought you were going to Europe.

DR. B.—I am, but you will be here when I get back.

DR. C.—I hope so, but we never know what will happen. If I am not here I want you to see to it that the provisions of my will are rigidly enforced.

DR. B.—I shall not fail you in that.

MRS. CAREY—(Right, in hat and gloves.) Good morning, Dr. Brighton. Are you scolding him for being out of bed.

DR. B.—No, Mrs. Carey. I am sending him to the farm.

MRS. C.—To the farm!

MR. C.—To the old home place. Mrs. Walton has invited us to come out. (Rising.) I am going to start packing now. I want to see you before you sail, William. (Ex. L.)

MRS. C.—O Doctor Brighton! Please do not send us out to that desolate place. I simply cannot stand the country. What have I done to you that you should inflict such punishment on me?

DR. B.—You don't like the country? If I had a nice farm like Bobby Walton's I would throw this medicine case away and settle down to solid comfort for the rest of my life. It is the one truly great life, Mrs. Carey, and I am sure you would like it if you knew it better.

MRS. C.—I do not want to know it better. Let me take him to the seashore where there is plenty of excitement.

DR. B.—Your husband is too old to play in the sand. What he needs is rest and contentment, and these he will find on the farm.

MRS. C.—I wish you had consulted me about this matter before you advised this change.

DR. B.—I thought you would be delighted. And I confess I am puzzled to understand your objection.

MRS. C.—I could not make you understand why I do not want him to go to the Walton farm; but as a special favor to me I ask that you persuade him not to go.

DR. B.—But I think it is best for him to go.

MRS. C.—Then you refuse my request?

DR. B.—Not exactly. But I refuse to sacrifice the health of my patient just to keep you from going to the country. Besides it isn't necessary for you to go. Let Ethelind take him. She would be glad to do it, I am sure.

MRS. C.—That is the point exactly. If Mr. Carey goes she will jump at the chance to go with him and I do not want her to do that.

DR. B.—O, you mean that she should not leave her Red Cross work here in the city.

MRS. C.—Yes, ah, yes, yes. It wouldn't be right for her to leave the work just at this time, you know.

DR. B.—There is Red Cross work to be done in the country, and I am sure Ethelind would find it; or, if not, she would help Mrs. Walton on the farm.

MRS. C.—Ethelind does not have to work on the farm, you know, Dr. Brighton.

DR. B.—I know that she is rich, and that she does not have to work on the farm or anywhere else. But I do not believe I misjudge her when I say she would be proud of such work, if she thought it would help her country.

MRS. C.—O, for heaven's sake, won't the people ever learn that the war is over. What is peace for, if not to be enjoyed?

DR. B.—You don't feel that way about it, do you?

MRS. C.—I think it is much more sensible than so much talk about the debts of gratitude we owe. This war was paid for as we went.

DR. B.—Only the soldiers paid as they went. We who stayed at home paid but the first installment, and it would be a great mistake to ignore this fact.

MRS. C.—This is a free country, and each person has a right to his own view. For my part I am willing to forget the war and stop prating about "carrying on."

DR. B.—Mrs. Carey, the American people are today in full possession of the greatest opportunity any people ever had to show that we are not unmindful of the price that has been paid for our liberty and freedom: and I do not believe we will ever forget that the war is over, or stop prating about carrying on, until we have given adequate expression of our gratitude to those men who gave, and those millions more who were willing to give the last full measure of their devotion.

MRS. C.—Have I said anything to cause you to feel that I do not agree with that sentiment?

DR. B.—Your remarks made me think of the great danger that lies in forgetting the tragedy through which we have just passed. They were dark days, and only by remembering them can we fully appreciate the prospect of peace; and only by standing by the soldiers until they have been placed back on the paths from which they were called to make this prospect possible, can we prove ourselves worthy of the benefits they have secured for us.

MRS. C.—That is a very nice argument, but what has it to do with sending Ethelind and Mr. Carey to the farm?

DR. B.—Nothing at all, unless by going there they will be able to assist the mother of a soldier.

MRS. C.—Then you are not sending Mr. Carey out there for his health.

DR. B.—O yes I am. It won't hurt him to do a little kind deed on the side. I rather think he will enjoy it. And as for Ethelind, I predict she will fall so in love with the farm that she will want to stay out there as long as she lives.

MRS. C.—Dr. Brighton, you are forcing me to take you into my confidence and tell you a family secret.

DR. B.—O, please don't do that. I have more family secrets than I can keep now. If I could just trade family secrets for gasoline I would be all right.

MRS. C.—I am going to tell you one anyhow. We want Ethelind to marry Max Martin.

DR. B.—What has Mr. Carey's going to the farm got to do with that?

MRS. C.—You are very stupid, Doctor. Don't you know that I have a very hard time preventing Ethelind from marrying this Bobby Walton, and that if you send her into his home where she will be in touch with his interest, all that I can do will not prevent her from marrying him?

DR. B.—I am afraid you do not know Bobby Walton.

MRS. C.—O, he is very nice, in a way; but he will never be anything but a plodding farmer. Until this abominable war came up she regarded him only as a friend, and seemed pleased to respect my wishes concerning Max. But because Max had the good sense to remain at home and make money for her she regards him as a slacker, and seems to be drifting to this Bobby Walton. It is not love she feels for him. It is nothing but patriotic madness; and I very well know that these war flirtations will wear away as quickly as they came up.

DR. B.—Then, why worry?

MRS. C.—Simply because I think it is disgusting to see a girl disregard every duty she owes her parents and herself, and throw her happiness and her fortune away on someone who is undeserving. If you will help me manage to keep her out of touch with this farm until her war fever cools off she will realize that I am right, and go ahead and marry Max as she should.

DR. B.—What is Mr. Carey's position in this matter?

MRS. C.—O, he thinks Ethelind does all things well, and would not have the courage to deny her anything she might ask of him. That is why I am driven to such extremes to do my duty to her.

DR. B.—I do not blame you for doing what you conceive to be your duty to Ethelind; but I do not see how it is possible for me to assist you.

MRS. C.—You can assist me by advising her not to go.

DR. B.—No, Mrs. Carey, I flatly refuse to do anything that might rob a wounded and helpless Liberty soldier of the protecting love of a loyal girl.

MRS. C.—Then let me ask that you do not encourage her to love him, or to dislike Max.

DR. B.—(Rising.) Mrs. Carey, I am a physician—not a matrimonial bureau. I shall have nothing to do with this love affair either one way or the other, except in so far as it interferes with my plain duty. And in this connection I feel that I ought to remind you that your husband is not going to live very long, and that it would be very unkind to trouble him with such matters. Just let the best man win. Good-day. (Ex. R.)

MRS. C.—So. No help from that source.

POLLY—(L.) Massar Carey said ax you whar his suit case is. We is gettin' ready to go to de farm.

MRS. C.—We? Are you going with him?

POLLY—Yassam. He said I could.

MRS. C.—Of course you are the one to go with him. Why didn't I think of that. The suit case is in the trunk room. (Ex. Polly L.) Now it is easy sailing.

MAX—(R.) Good evening, Auntie. Have I cought her at home this time.

MRS. C.—No, Max, but she should be here soon. It is highly important that you see her at once.

MAX—(Sitting.) Then I suppose it is another case of "watchful waiting."

MRS. C.—And some real good scheming. Mr. Carey is going to the farm, and we must prevent Ethelind from going with him.

MAX—I am willing. How can it be done?

MRS. C.—Get her promise to marry you at once.

MAX—It would be easier to let her go to the farm.

MRS. C.—But it would not be as profitable to you. If you let her go out there you have lost her.

MAX—Not on your life, Auntie. It is exactly as I would have it. According to plan, you might say.

MRS. C.—It is a very poor plan, Max, and I insist that you do not follow it.

MAX—If you knew what I do you would not say that.

MRS. C.—Is there any reason why I should not know?

MAX—Certainly not. I came by especially to tell you that my suspicions concerning our friend Bobby Walton are correct. He did buy the Gerst property and the party from whom he bought is an alien. When I

have finished with him he will know that he cannot pull off a stunt like that and hide it in a uniform.

MRS. C.—Have you positive proof of this?

MAX—Why, Auntie, haven't you learned that you do not need positive proof to create an impression? All I want to do is to raise the question and get the people to talking.

MRS. C.—Have you told Ethelind this?

MAX—She would not believe me. I think it much better to let her go to the farm and learn it from the neighbors.

MRS. C.—Is it generally known out there?

MAX—I hope those simple country people do not suspect anything of the kind; for I want to save it for the politician sensation of the year.

MRS. C.—Political sensation! What do you mean?

MAX—I mean that as a last desperate effort to win Ethelind I am going to try for the congressional nomination.

MRS. C.—O, how perfectly lovely! With an honor like that she cannot refuse you.

MAX—I am hoping it will work, but if it fails I will at least have the satisfaction of making her hero less attractive to her.

MRS. C.—I have no objection to that, but I do not see how it would aid you in getting the nomination.

MAX—That is because you do not know that your dear husband is secretly doing everything he can to secure this nomination for our friend and rival, Bobby Walton.

MRS. C.—It is an outrage. A disgraceful shame. I will not let him do it.

MAX—Please, now, don't spoil my good scheme by letting him know that we are wise to his plans. Everything is just exactly as I want it, and I welcome the opportunity to put Walton down and out of Ethelind's reach. Just let the matter rock along as if we knew nothing about it. At the proper time—which will be when it is too late for them to refute it—I will spring the enemy property deal of Walton's and make him look like a German thrift stamp. Mr. Carey will drop him like he was hot, and his chances for getting the nomination and marrying Ethelind will be about as good—well, as good as mine seem to be at present.

MRS. C.—I am afraid you are too hopeful, Max. There are too many things that could happen to your plan.

MAX—What, for instance?

MRS. C.—Well, in the first place, I think there is very great danger of driving Ethelind to Walton's defense. If you do that she will stand by him to the last, and then sink or swim with him.

MAX—Not if the whole country is pointing the finger of suspicion at him, will she?

MRS. C.—Probably not, but I am not so sure that you

will succeed at that. You must not forget that he has the advantage of service and wound stripes.

MAX—And you must not forget that I am going to make the people believe he is using these very stripes to hide a shady transaction. You do not understand the psychology of my plan.

MRS. C.—I understand enough to know that the slightest failure in such a plan will place you beyond redemption, and I sincerely hope you will not use it until you have exhausted every other means to make Ethelind marry you before Bobby Walton comes back. I hear her coming now. See if you cannot persuade her not to go to the farm. (Ex. L.)

ETHELIND—(R. With hat, as from the street.) Why, hello, Max.

MAX—Hello, Ethelind. I dropped in to tell you some good news.

ETH.—(Sitting.) What is it. Have you made some more money.

MAX—That isn't what I wanted to tell you; but you may be glad to know that the committee appointed to investigate our profits on the war contract have reported that they could find nothing to indicate that we took more than is justified by the exigencies of war.

ETH.—How much does this mean to you?

MAX—One hundred thousand dollars.

ETH.—Are you sure that you have earned that much.

MAX—Well, I couldn't say I have sweated it out exactly.

ETH.—Then you haven't earned it.

MAX—The Government is paying for brains as well as muscle, you know.

ETH.—(Smiling.) Evidently.

MAX—(Waits.) Now should I be insulted?

ETH.—No. I think you should feel complimented to be able to sell your brain at such a price. What will you take for your soul, Max?

MAX—O, come, Ethelind. War must be financed and managed as any other big business. The government sent the men who had nothing but brawn into the trenches and placed those of us with brains behind the desks. You seem to forget that it is just as honorable to direct the millions as it is to be one of them.

ETH.—O, certainly; but it does not follow that the directors must make fortunes out of their services, when the men who actually do the fighting must make sacrifices even of what they have.

MAX—You would make a great Bolshevik.

ETH.—Never. It is Profiteers like you who make Bolsheviks.

MAX—Now, Ethelind, I know that you are not a Bolshevik, and I do not want you to think I am a Profiteer. I am making lots of money, it is true; but it is all for you.

ETH.—I would rather you had less money, Max, and

a deeper sense of duty to your county. I have told you this many times, but it seems to have no effect on you. I have tried to justify your position and see the matter as you want me to, but I find it impossible to avoid the conclusion that you are feathering your nest with the eagle's wings. It will never bring you happiness or comfort. It can only bring disappointment and disrespect.

MAX—Where did you get that argument?

ETH.—It isn't an argument. It is my honest conviction.

MAX—Then what would you have me do?

ETH.—If it is impossible for you to have anything to do with these war contracts without making fortunes out of them I think it is your plain duty to square yourself with your fellowman by turning a fair part of these profits back to them in the form of contributions to safeguard the interests they have bled and died for.

MAX—Then you do not consider the service I have given as worth anything.

ETH.—I don't say that exactly, but I do think your service has been worth more to you than to your country; and for that reason I cannot consider it any service at all.

MAX—When you get through preaching at me I am going to tell you something that will please you very much.

ETH.—I am through. What is it?

MAX—It is a secret, but I want you to know it. I am going to try for the Congressional nomination.

ETH.—You are?

MAX—And I am doing it solely for you.

ETH.—Why do you say that?

MAX—Because I want to see you in Washington society where you belong.

ETH.—That would be very nice, but I don't want you to do this just for me.

MAX—Who else would I want to share such an honor with me?

ETH.—Somebody who loves you, Max. I can never be anything but your friend, wishing you good luck in everything you undertake that is right.

MAX—You don't mean to say you will never marry me.

ETH.—Have I ever given you cause to feel otherwise?

MAX—I have always hoped you would, and I am still going to depend on you. Some of these days you are going to find out that all brave men did not go to war, and that not all men in uniform are heroes.

ETH.—I know that much already.

MAX—Then why are you so crazy over a uniform?

ETH.—If I had time, and felt like it, I would explain that to you. But I am too tired to undertake it now.

MAX—Why are you so tired?

ETH.—Well, Max, you see I am crazy about a Uniform that I just love to work down at the Red Cross

Canteen where I can hand out doughnuts and sandwiches to every one I see. And occasionally I have the pleasure of writing a card for some poor fellow who gave his writing hand for Liberty. O, it is a great way to go crazy, and I wish you were not so sane that you cannot sympathize with it.

MAX—I am in hearty sympathy with such work as that, and I hope you will stay in the city and continue it.

ETH.—If I give it up it will be for something more important.

MAX—Do you think going to the country with your father is more important than the Red Cross work?

ETH.—I will have to talk with father before I can answer that question. He is my guide in such matters, and I always follow his advice.

MAX—I don't blame you; for he always lets you have your way; but I want you to remember that I advised you not to go.

ETH.—If we do go I hope you will run out to see us occasionally. (Max rises.) And let us know how your race for congress is getting along. (Rises.)

MAX—I may be around that way before long, and of course I will want to see you. In the meantime think over what I have said. Goodby. (Ex. R.)

MRS. C.—(L.) Where is Max?

ETH.—He has just gone. He is on his way to Congress.

MRS. C.—I am so glad he has decided to make the race. Aren't you.

ETH.—O yes, but I was much more pleased to hear that we are going to the farm.

MRS. C.—Who told you that?

ETH.—Dr. Brighton, and then Max. And Max was kind enough to say he thought I should not go.

MRS. C.—He was right, dear. It would be better to send Polly with your father. You and I will stay here and have a big time keeping house. We can't all go. I wouldn't think of taking you away from your Red Cross work at this time.

ETH.—This is not the only place they do Red Cross work. Out on the farm I can help in lots of ways. And besides it wouldn't be right to let Daddy go alone.

MRS. C.—He will have Polly and the nurse.

ETH.—But if I go with him the nurse can go overseas and help the wounded soldiers.

MRS. C.—O, for heaven's sake, Ethelind, there are other people besides the soldiers.

ETH.—(Going L.) But there are none so deserving.

MRS. C.—Sit down, Ethelind. I have something important to say to you.

ETH.—(Coming back.) What is it?

MRS. C.—I want to remind you that you are not treating Max right. Why do you neglect him so.

ETH.—Now, mother, please let's not go into that sub-

ject again. You know how I feel about Max, and so does he. It is useless for you to urge him on me.

MRS. C.—I feel that it is my duty to do so.

ETH.—Your duty to whom, Max?

MRS. C.—To both of you, dear. And I want you to look at this matter from every standpoint before you make your decision, and be certain that you make no mistake.

ETH.—I think I have already done that.

MRS. C.—Are you fully decided?

ETH.—I think I am, but I want to talk to daddy before I answer you.

MRS. C.—Your father is too indulgent to advise you. He thinks everything you do is right, and would let you have your way, even tho he knew it was not best for you. Now I am looking at this matter with nothing to prevent me from seeing your best interest.

ETH.—I appreciate your interest, mother, but I might as well tell you that I do not appreciate so much propaganda in Max's behalf. You must leave me to make my own choice.

MRS. C.—I want you to do that, but I want you to choose with your eyes open. That is why I trouble you so much.

ETH.—I do not think I am so blind that I cannot see my way. But, of course, if you can give me any good reason why Bobby Walton is not just as worthy as Max, I shall give it every consideration.

MRS. C.—There is every reason why you should prefer Max.

ETH.—Name one.

MRS. C.—In the first place Bobby Walton is nothing but a farmer, and will never be anything else.

ETH.—He won't be put in jail for that, will he?

MRS. C.—I want you to be serious.

ETH.—Then don't tell me that farmers must not have wives.

MRS. C.—I do not say that. Let them marry girls who have no higher ambitions than being buried alive out in the desolate weeds of discontent.

ETH.—O, I do feel that way about the farm. To me it is a dear old place brimming full of happiness and self-respect. Out there one sees things grow, and instead of the little bickerings of fickle society, one hears the music of contented creatures that really live. O, I think it would be grand to live on a nice farm that is well managed by a gentleman. What is the next reason?

MRS. C.—The next reason is that Bobby will probably be an invalid all of his life, and you would only be a slave to him. Instead of your ideal farm life you will find after a while only bitter disappointment. Then you will wish you had been more sensible.

ETH.—Mother, let me tell you something. If Bobby is never to enjoy good health again there is nothing in the wold I would rather do than to spend the rest of my

life trying to show him how much I revere his scars. Our boys left a land flowing with milk and honey and went into the teeth of death to stanch the blood that was flowing from the heart of the world. They did this, thank God, and now they are coming back, some of them bruised and broken, to start life over again. Would you let them feel that we who applauded their going are not still standing on the home shore with those same hands out-stretched to them in holy gratitude?

MRS. C.—Certainly we should be grateful, but it does not follow that we should be foolish.

ETH.—(Rising and going. L.) Call it what you will, mother, gratitude, or foolishness. I am for the soldiers.

MRS. C.—So am I, but I think the government, and not you, should provide the pensions for them.

ETH.—Feel about it as you will, and call it what you will, but there is at least one soldier who will come back and find the promise made him holds good. And if he has no arms to throw round me I can at least lean against him and feel that what is left of him is every inch a man.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE—Plain room at the home of the Waltons, one month later. Mrs. Carey seated center reading. (Polly R.)

MRS. C.—Must I wait all day for my breakfast, Polly?

POLLY—'Scuse me, Missus. I thot I'd get back afore you got up.

MRS. C.—Where have you been?

POLLY—Up to de graveyard, helpin' Miss Ethelind and Miss Mattie set some rose bushes round Massar Carey's grave. You ought to see how pretty it looks.

MRS. C.—I am going up there today before we start back.

POLLY—We aint goin' back to Richmond today is we?

MRS. C.—If I have my way we are.

POLLY—Is Miss Ethelind gwine too?

MRS. C.—If she is sensible she will.

POLLY—I ain't sayin' she ain't sensible, but I got a notion she gwine to be hard to git away fum here.

MRS. C.—What makes you think that?

POLLY—Jes' her gen'l conduc'.

MRS. C.—Miss Ethelind's general conduct is going to improve from now on, Polly. She won't have her way as easily as she did when her father was alive.

POLLY—We's all gwine to miss dat good man, ain't we?

MRS. C.—O, yes, but it won't do any good to remain out here. You hurry my breakfast and then start pack-

ing. Mr. Martin will be here this morning, and we must be ready to return with him.

POLLY—He's settin' out on de po'ch now.

MRS. C.—Why didn't you invite him in?

POLLY—I thot he knowed what he was doin'. (Ex. R.)

MAX—(R.) Good morning, Auntie.

MRS. C.—Why, good morning, Max. How long have you been waiting?

MAX—Not long. I have been sitting on the porch enjoying the view. It is splendid. I am not surprised that Mr. Carey thought so much of this old farm.

MRS. C.—Now, Max, don't you fall in love with it. After all it is just a farm. Your job is to get Ethelind away from here as soon as possible.

MAX—I have a great plan, Auntie. It has occurred to me that possibly it is the farm and not Bobby Walton that Ethelind loves. So I have decided to own the farm.

MRS. C.—But you cannot take it away from him.

MAX—I think I can. (Produces large envelope.) Here is a little instrument with which I hope to take possession of this farm in such a way as to make it appear to Walton that Ethelind cares nothing for him. It is a mortgage covering a large overdue balance on the farm, and I am going to demand settlement at once.

MRS. C.—That is lucky. Where did you get it?

MAX—I found it in Mr. Carey's private papers. I forgot to tell you that I was appointed administrator of his estate yesterday.

MRS. C.—O, I am glad of that. I was afraid when his vault was opened a will would be discovered.

MAX—Well, Auntie, where there is a WILL there is also a WAY, you know. And in this case I prefer the WAY.

MRS. C.—Then there was a will?

MAX—A very proper ones, to be sure, making our friend, Dr. Brighton, Executor without bond. He is at present in Europe on a government inspection of hospitals and will be there at least three months. This gives me an open road to proceed as administrator.

MRS. C.—But, Max, it is dangerous to undertake a thing like that. Suppose the will is found.

MAX—Have no fear of that. I have placed it well out of the way where no one will find it. And when I tell you that in a recent codicil to that will this mortgage was given to Ethelind to do with as she pleased you will agree that it would be better not to burden her with such a responsibility.

MRS. C.—I do agree with you. It is an absurdity. He might as well have willed his daughter to him and been done with it.

MAX—And to make certain that the will and mortgage did not become separated he sealed them in this envelope and marked it important. It was a very pretty scheme, but we shall see who scheme best. With this

mortgage I shall not fail to make it appear to Mrs. Walton that it is impossible for them to hold this farm.

MRS. C.—She can force you to wait until her son comes home, can't she?

MAX—I am going to offer her more than they have paid on the farm and take it back. This will get rid of them, and incidentally leave the impression on Walton that Ethelind sanctions our action. O, it's a long scheme, Auntie, and you must leave it to me. Just sit still and don't rock the boat, and everything will work out as we wish it.

POLLY—(L.) Yo' breakfast am served, Missus.

MRS. C.—Polly, if Mrs. Walton has returned ask her to come in here, please. (Ex. P.—L.) Now, Max, please do not do anything that will get us into trouble. And above all things do not make the mistake of taking a position you cannot defend.

MAX—Leave it all to me and I will show you more diplomacy than has been displayed at the Peace Conference, and a much quickened settlement of the spoils.

MRS. C.—I am trusting you to take care of my interests as well as yours. Mrs. Walton is coming. (Goes A., admitting her.) Mrs. Walton, meet my nephew, Mr. Martin.

MRS. W.—How do you do, Mrs. Martin.

MAX—I am pleased to meet you, Mrs. Walton.

MRS. C.—Mr. Martin has been appointed administrator of Mr. Carey's estate and wishes to see you in regard to a very important matter that concerns your son.

MRS. W.—I am sorry he is not here to speak for himself, but perhaps I can give you the information you desire.

MAX—When do you expect him home? (Ex. Mrs. C.—L.)

MRS. W.—I had a letter yesterday stating that he is taking a special treatment now and expects to be able to start for home in about sixty days.

MAX—I am sorry he will be delayed like that; for it forces me to do a very unpleasant duty.

MRS. W.—What is that?

MAX—It is in connection with this mortgage. There is a balance of five thousand dollars due on it, and as administrator it is my duty to demand immediate payment.

MRS. W.—Is it impossible to let this matter wait until my son comes home and can give it his attention?

MAX—You can compel me to do that, of course; but I hope we may be able to come to some settlement that will be more pleasant to all concerned.

MRS. W.—The only really pleasant way to settle such a matter would be to pay what is due; but I cannot do that unless I can sell a little farm Bobby bought just before he went to France.

MAX—You mean the Gerst property?

MRS. W.—Yes. That will bring enough to pay this mortgage, won't it?

MAX—As your friend I advise you not to try to raise any money on that property.

MRS. W.—Why do you say that?

MAX—Because it is enemy alien property, and your son is going to be very lucky if he is not exposed and punished for his connection with it.

MRS. W.—You are wrong about that. Mr. Carey had his lawyer investigate the title, and he reported that it was perfectly good.

MAX—It may be, but I would not have it in my name for five times what it is worth. It is none of my business, but I feel that I ought to advise you to urge your son to remain in France for a while if he does not want to be arrested and tried as soon as he comes home.

MRS. W.—O, Mr. Martin, that would kill him. Isn't there anyway it could be avoided?

MAX—Let me advise you, Mrs. Walton.

MRS. W.—I would appreciate it so much.

MAX—Looking at this matter from your standpoint, and considering that it would be very unkind to your son even if he could come home, to permit him in his present condition to try to earn the money to pay this heavy obligation, I do not hesitate to say to you that it would be far better for him to sell the farm and take life easy. And to show you how sincere I am about this, and because I desire to help you do the best thing for him, I will return you in cash the ten thousand dollars he has paid on it and an additional five thousand dollars, if he will give me immediate possession. With this amount of money you can give him every comfort as long as he lives and it will be much better for him than being burdened with a large debt.

MRS. W.—You are very kind, Mr. Martin, and I shall write Bobby at once what you say.

MAX—And tell him I am offering the extra high price because Ethelind wants me to give her the farm as a wedding present.

MRS. W.—Is that so? You are getting a fine girl, Mr. Martin, and I wish you the greatest happiness.

MAX—Thank you. Don't let her know I told you. We are keeping it a secret for a while yet.

MRS. W.—I promise; but it is a temptation to let her know how much she can beat you keeping a secret.

MAX—I have not told anyone but you, and I did that because I wanted you to know my special interest in the farm. And as a special favor to me I ask that you do not let Ethelind know that I am trying to get it for her. I want it to be a surprise, you understand.

MRS. W.—It is going to be a great disappointment to Bobby, but when he learns that Ethelind wishes to repossess her father's old home place I am sure he will be willing to make any sacrifice to please her.

MAX—She has a great sentiment for the place and

I sincerely hope it can be arranged for her to hold the deed to it. I think she had this in her mind when she buried her father out here.

MRS. W.—Yes, I heard him say he wanted to be buried here where she could care for his grave.

MAX—Of course he would never have said that if he had not felt that she would own the property. I think you understand perfectly why I am so interested. And I appreciate your sympathy with my plans. Just set the facts before your son and let me know his decision. I am prepared to pay the fifteen thousand in cash as soon as you are ready.

MRS. W.—I will write him today.

MAX—Let's cable him. I will pay the charges.

MRS. W.—Could we make him understand that way?

MAX—O, certainly. (Takes up mortgage, smiling.) We will write it out here on this old mortgage. (Wites and reads.) "Capt. Bobby Walton." What is his address?

MRS. W.—Base Hospital No. 19, Paris France.

MAX—"Mr. Carey dead. Administrator demands settlement of mortgage; or offers fifteen thousand dollars in cash for your equity. I advise selling, at Ethelind wishes to repossess place. Above offer is made by her fiance. Answer quick. Mother." This is clear, isn't it?

MRS. W.—Yes, I think he will understand that.

MAX—If he accepts my offer you let me know and I will run out and close the deal.

MRS. C.—(L.) Is the business session over?

MAX—O yes, and we have had a delightful chat. It is very pleasant to do business with reasonable people like Mrs. Walton. And now if Ethelind is ready we will start for Richmond.

MRS. W.—Won't you stay for dinner?

MAX—No, thank you, Mrs. Walton. I must hurry back to meet a very important engagement.

MRS. W.—I will tell Ethelind you are waiting. (Ex.—L.)

MAX—Everything is lovely. And now we have nothing to do but get Ethelind away from here.

MRS. C.—What if she refuses to go?

MAX—She is not going to do that. You go and be getting ready. I want to talk to her alone. (Ex. Mrs. C.—L.)

ETH.—(R.) Good morning, Max.

MAX—Good morning, Ethelind. I am sorry to trouble you with business matters, but it is necessary that you and your mother return to Richmond with me and aid me in closing up your father's estate.

ETH.—I thought such matters were taken care of by a will, or something like that.

MAX—Usually they are, but in the absence of a will an administrator must be appointed to take charge. I have been honored with this appointment and I assure you it is a very great pleasure to me to be able assist

you in this way. I have given up my race for Congress so that I can place myself entirely at your service.

ETH.—I do not want you to make such a sacrifice.

MAX—It is no sacrifice. It is a great pleasure to stand by you when you need a friend, and I hope you will feel free to call on me for any advice and help I can give you.

ETH.—I shall be in great need of advice; for I know absolutely nothing at all about business matters. But I want you to understand before you go into this that I accept the service as that of a friend, and with the understanding that you will receive the usual compensation for what you do.

MAX—We won't fall out about the terms. All I ask is that you go back to Richmond with your mother and me today and let me help you all I can.

ETH.—Is it really necessary for me to go?

MAX—(Smiling.) If it wasn't I wouldn't ask it.

ETH.—(Rising.) If you are willing to do so much for me I surely will help you all I can. I will be ready in just a minute. (Goes L.)

MAX—(Going R.) I will change tires while you are getting ready. (Ex. R.)

POLLY—(L.) You ain't gwine wid 'm, is you, Miss Ethelind?

ETH.—I think it is best.

POLLY—Now I's sorry 'bout dat, 'cause I done bragged dat you'd stay out here.

ETH.—You stay and help Mrs. Walton. I will return just as soon as I have found my father's will.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—Hospital in France. Next day. Bobby seated center dressed as soldier, except bathrobe instead of coat. Towel round throat as if Henry had just been shaving him. Henry drying razor, etc.

BOBBY—You are a pretty good barber, Henry.

HENRY—Yassar. Dat was my business before I was invited to join Uncle Sam's house party over here in Europe.

BOBBY—And you have a good razor, too.

HENRY—Yassar, it is. It have got me out of some mighty tight places. When it comes to a "close up" dis razor have got a hand grenade skinned a mile. You ax dem Germans.

BOBBY—What do they know about it?

HENRY—Nuffin much, cept'n I can give 'm a haircut and a shave all at one swipe.

BOBBY—It must be a good one.

HENRY—Yassar. It am a good one. I cut de Hin-

denburg line wid dis razor. Dat was when we took de melon away from Germany.

BOBBY—Melon!

HENRY—Yassar. Watermelon. I's speakin' of France.

BOBBY—I am afraid France would not like your simile.

HENRY—Well, now, Mr. Bobby, you stop and think. France am a whole lot like a watermelon. She got a heart, ain't she?

BOBBY—A great heart, yes.

HENRY—And she got juice, ain't she?

BOBBY—Plenty of it.

HENRY—Yassar, and good juice, too. Well, we done give her de Rhine. Don't dat make a melon?

BOBBY—Did you see that Rhine?

HENRY—I went fishin' in it. And I caught enough German carp for de whole Allied fo'ces.

BOBBY—You must have used Limburger cheese for bait.

HENRY—No, I didn't. I got a better scheme 'n dat.

BOBBY—You didn't use hand grenades, did you.

HENRY—No sah. I got a better scheme 'n dat. Wid my secret process you don't have to git yo' feet wet.

BOBBY—Well, tell me how you caught them.

HENRY—I learned it fum mammy down in Virginny. When she goes fishin' she allus ties a little piece of red flannel jes' above her hook. She says it 'tracts attention. Well, sir, I don dat, and when I thowed my hook into date Rhine dem succors thought it wus de American flag, and ever las' one of dem come rat out on de bank and surrendered.

BOBBY—That is a pretty good one.

HENRY—I's got a lot of good ones to tell dem niggers what stayed at home and don't know nuffin'. And say, Mr. Bobby, when is we gwine to be demoralized, anyhow?

BOBBY—Demoralized!

HENRY—Yassar. Discharged.

BOBBY—O, you mean demobilized.

HENRY—Ain't dat what I said.

BOBBY—Are you anxious to be demoralized?

HENRY—Now, Cap'n, I cain't tell you no lie. I sutlinly wouldn't pull back none if dey wus to try to put me on a transpo'te headed for God's country.

BOBBY—Are you homesick?

HENRY—I's de homesickest nigger in Europe.

BOBBY—I don't know about that.

HENRY—Well, if you is any sicker 'n I is I feel sorry for you. And I hopes when I sails it'l be jes' at sun-down on a clear day.

BOBBY—I have thought I would like to start home just as the sun is setting; but who told you home is in the setting sun?

HENRY—I found dat out de evenin' afore we went

into battle de fust time. We wus tired en lonesome, and I got to thinkin' 'bout home. Den I 'membered I didn't eben know which way to look tow'd home. I axed a officer if he'd tell me, and he said, "Nigger, see dat settin' sun? Dat's home." And den he blowed his nose rat quick and told me to go to hell. And ever since dat I ain't let a sun go down onless I tried to feel dat I was on a boat a-sailin' rat squar' to de end of dat glorified path.

BOBBY—Are you married, Henry?

HENRY—No, sir, but I specs to be when I gets back, case I figger all dem gals 'l be wild over dis uniform. (Stands erect, hand on bedal. Bobby sees it.)

BOBBY—Is that a decoration you are wearing?

HENRY—Yassar. And I wus beginnin' to think you'd never see it. I's proud o' dat.

BOBBY—Sit down and tell me how you got it.

HENRY—Thank you, sah. It was up dar in one of dem towns what you got to say under yo' tongue and thru yo' nose. We wus fightin' alongside a bunch of de gamest white boys in dis whole army—dat scrappin' Thirtieth. Dat Thirtieth and dat Twenty-seventh sho' am two fire eatin' bunches, Mr. Bobby. Dey's de ones what made de Fo'teen Points look so all fired acceptable, you know.

BOBBY—Yes, I think they colored them up considerably.

HENRY—Well, we wus down in de trenches—some prayin' and some shootin' craps—waitin' for Mr. Zero. Every big gun we had, and all we could borrow, was givin' tongue, and de noise made dem trenches rock and swell jes' lack dat big boat did comin' over. Finally de order cum and over we went. For a while we jes' jockeyed along behin' our barage, and de goin' was REASONABLY good. But all of a sudden dat barage lifted.....disappeared.....vanished, and lef' us in de middle of de biggest cuttin', and shootin', and strickin' scrap DE WORLD HAVE EVER SEEN. Lemme stop rat here and ax you a question.

BOBBY—All right. What is it?

HENRY—Why do dey ever lift dat barage, anyHOW?

BOBBY—Why, that is Military Science, Henry.

HENRY—It may be Military Science, Mr. Bobby, but it sho' am de debil on de Infuntry.

BOBBY—Go on and tell me how you got the Cross. You had the barage curtain up and you were on the stage where all the men were actors.

HENRY—Yassar. Dat's right. And my bayonet had its exits and its entrances, and I played many parts.

BOBBY—You know some Shakespeare, don't you?

HENRY—Boss, you jes' naturally got shake a spear in a case like dat. Well, sir, I thought my time had come sho'. It got so hote dat I reached in my pocket and got dem dice and thowed 'm away.

BOBBY—It must have been hot.

HENRY—I'm tellin' you it was. Why, dat bunch of niggers finally got so hot dat dem Germans had to put on dey gas masks.....Den we stopped to rest.

BOBBY—What did you stop for?

HENRY—We run out of Germans.....And whilst I was restin' one of dem big German shells pulls up alongside of me and turns de eath over on me. I scratched out and set down on dat new pile of dirt jes' a minute. 'Bout dat time I felt somethin' hot runnin down my side. "Bleedin' to def," I says to myself. I knowed dat if I didn't get back to dat hawspital 'bout fo' miles to de rear, mighty quick, dat Uncle Sam 'd be minus a mighty good soldier. 'Bout dat time de shadow of a Benzine Bat come along.

BOBBY—What is a Benzine Bat?

HENRY—Dat's a Airplane. And de shadow of it come along and it was headed rat squar' tow'ds my Objective. (Sighs.) Well, Mr. Bobby, I'm tellin' you straight. My feet jes' natully stepped on dat shadow and away I went. Up hill and down hill, me and dat shadow had it. I made it all rat, 'ceptin' once when we come to a river. Of cose he had de vantage of me den, but he seen my trouble and looped de loop a couple of times whilst I caught up. After dat I stayed rat on dat shadow until we pulled up at dat hawspital.

BOBBY—Do you mean to tell me that you ran all the way to that hospital?

HENRY—No sir. I didn't run. I FLEW.

BOBBY—Why didn't you take one of the ambulances that passed you on the road?

HENRY—Didn't no ambulances pass me. Dat shadow was a heap faster'n any ambulance.

BOBBY—Did they find you seriously wounded?

HENRY—Jes' a compound fraction of de skull, was all.

BOBBY—I thought you said it was your side.

HENRY—No sir. My side was alrat. Dat was jes' sweat I felt runnin' down my side. I want hut at all.

BOBBY—But your head. You say it was hurt.

HENRY—Not when I started dat retreat, it want.

BOBBY—Then when were you wounded?

HENRY—Well, you see, Mr. Bobby, dat airplane was goin' to dat same hawspital, en I jes' neglected to git off'n de shadow in time for it to light.

BOBBY—They didn't give you a medal for a stunt like that, did they?

HENRY—Indeed dey didn't. Dey waited until it was dark as a stack of blind black cats, and tole me if I'd repo'te to my Top Sargeant afore sun-rise, dey'd call it squar'. I went back and rambled roun' in dat No Man's Lan' all dat never-to-be-disremembered night. And lem-me tell you somepin'. It takes a BRAVE man to do dat.

BOBBY—I should think so. But how much further is it to where you got that medal?

HENRY—Jes' about a kilometer.

BOBBY—Well, hurry on. It is nearly time to have my wound dressed.

HENRY—Then we'll skip a lot of blood-curdlin' adventures out in dat No Man's Lan,' and come to de pint. At day break I hadn't found my gang and I fell down in a shell hole to spen' de day. Purty soon I heard somebody callin', "Buddie, Buddie!" I knowed he was hut mighty bad, and I crawled over to 'm. And he was purty nigh done wid. He tole me how to go, and I took him on my back and crawled out wid him.

BOBBY—Were you wounded in the attempt?

HENRY—Or, no sir. I was wounded in de leg. And it sho' did hurt to crawl on dat knee after dat. But I got him back to his men. He was dey Lieutenant. He got a medal, too.

BOBBY—He did?

HENRY—Yassar. He got one for goin' out dar and I got one for bringin' him back. Dat's a purty good system, ain't it?

BOBBY—Yes, it works both ways.

HENRY—(Rising.) Well, Mr. Bobby, I'll be goin'. If you gits back home before I do tell mammy I's comin' jes' as soon as de good Lawd and Gen'l Pershing am willin'.

BOBBY—All right. Be patient, Henry. We will get back home sometime I hope. Come back to see me when you can.

HENRY—Thank you, sah. I'll be back. Goodby. (Ex. L.)

ROSA—(R.) I have some very bad news for you.

BOBBY—What is it, Rosa? Must I have another operation?

ROSA—It isn't that. Mr. Carey is dead.

BOBBY—Then I have lost the best friend I ever had.

ROSA—You have lost more than that. (Hands cable.)

BOBBY—(Reads and waits short space.) You are right, Rosa. I have lost everything. But it is hard for me to believe that Ethelind could find it in her heart to punish me like this when I am so utterly friendless and alone. The last words she ever said to me were, "While you are away remember when you come back you will find me standing by." I am sorry she did not let me cling to that promise until I am better able to give it up.

ROSA—Maybe there is some mistake.

BOBBY—Mother sent this massage, and she never makes a mistake like that. Don't hold out a false hope for me; for I am not strong enough to be disappointed again. Just hurry down to the cable office and send this answer: (Rosa writes as he dictates.) "Accept offer and come to me at once."

ROSA—But we will be going home very soon.

BOBBY—I think I would be happier in a strange land for a while, and I will have to feel very different towards my home country if I ever see it again.

ROSA—Now, Bobby, don't say that. Take my advice and let the matter wait until you get home.

BOBBY—No. Go and send the message as I have told you.

ROSA—(Going R.) I will do as you say, but I feel certain it is not the right thing to do.

DR. B.—(R.) Well, well, well. At last I have found you.

ROSA—(Elated.) Dr. Brighton. What are you doing here?

DR. B.—Looking up my friends. (Going to Bobby.) How are you, my boy?

BOBBY—(Sadly.) O, very well, Dr. Brighton. I am glad to see you.

DR. B.—I am glad you say so, for you don't look it. But when I tell you what the head surgeon says about you going home you will be more pleased to see me.

BOBBY—It would be unkind to send me home now.

DR. B.—Come, Bobby. If you knew what awaits you at home you would not say that.

BOBBY—I do know what awaits me. That is why I say it.

DR. B.—Have you had bad news from home?

BOBBY—Let him read the message. Rosa. (She gives it.)

DR.—(Reads. Startled.) What! Mr. Carey dead! I must go home at once and I shall take you with me.

BOBBY—Read on, Dr. and you will see why I cannot go.

DR. B.—(Reads and studies short space.) Have you answered this?

ROSA—I was going to answer it when you came in.

DR. B.—Is this the answer written here on the bottom? "Accept offer and come to me?"

ROSA—He will not have it any other way.

DR. B.—Let me answer for you, Bobby.

BOBBY—You don't understand.

DR. B.—I know more than you think I do, my boy. And I am not going to let you do something you might regret. Send this answer, Rosa. "Let business wait until I come home. Am sailing soon. Bobby."

BOBBY—If you want to be kind to me I insist that you let my answer stand. I cannot go home.

DR. B.—Is it because of the Gerst property?

BOBBY—What do you mean?

DR. B.—There has been some question as to whether this is alien property. I thought you knew.

BOBBY—Who was kind enough to raise that question?

DR. B.—Max Martin suggested it to me.

BOBBY—Then you may send your message. At any cost to me I shall go home and defend my honor and that of Albert Gerst, who can never go home; for he gave his life for my flag.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 1—Same as Act I, two weeks later.

ETH.—(L. Crossing to admit Dr. B.—R.) O, Dr. Brighton! Is it really you?

DR. B.—My dear girl, I am sorry I could not be with you sooner. But I am here now and want you to tell me if there is anything I can do for you.

ETH.—There is so much I hardly know where to begin.

DR. B.—First, let me ask you whether your father's will has been found?

ETH.—Max says there was none.

DR. B.—I say there was.

ETH.—O, if only it could be found.

DR. B.—It would be a great embarrassment to Max.

ETH.—I should not hesitate at that. He has treated Mrs. Walton shamefully, and I know my father did not intend to give him such a privilege.

DR. B.—Do you wish Bobby to keep the farm?

ETH.—You know I do, Doctor Brighton.

DR. B.—(Gives cablegram.) What do you know about that?

ETH.—(Reads.) It is a hideous falsehood. Where did you get this?

DR. B.—By the greatest good luck I happened to visit Bobby just after he received it. (Pointing it out.) There is the answer he was sending.

ETH.—Did Bobby doubt me like that?

DR. B.—You must not forget that his mother sent that message.

ETH.—I want to cable a correction at once.

DR. B.—Cable? I brought him home with me.

ETH.—Has he come home and did not let me know it?

DR. B.—He felt that you would not care to know it, and I can assure you he has a very heavy heart, and that he is selling his home only because he thinks you want it.

ETH.—Isn't there any way to prevent Max from foreclosing on this mortgage?

DR. B.—The mortgage belongs to you. You can do as you please with it.

ETH.—O, how happy I would be if I could prove to Bobby that my father was his friend.

DR. B.—You will soon have that pleasure. Here is a letter your father wrote me just before he died, advising me of a change in his will. I found it on my desk when I returned last night. By this change the mortgage is given to you to do with as you please.

ETH.—(Rising.) Will you go with me to the farm at once?

DR. B.—I think we should find Max and confront him with these facts.

ETH.—That is what I mean to do; but unless we hurry

it will be too late. He and mother went to the farm just before you came in.

DR. B.—Get your hat. It is just twenty miles out there, and my car is at the door.

ETH.—I do not need a hat. I am ready to ride as fast as you may wish to drive. (Leads out R.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE 2—At the Walton home. One hour later.

POLLY—(Seated center with photo. Doll and dress in chair by her side. Addresses photo.) Bress yo li'l heart, honey, you mus' be powerful lonesome widout no daddy, en no home, en no dolls to play wid; en maybe you is ragged en hongry besides, but don't you cry, sweet chile, ole black mammy got you now en she goin' to stan' by you to her las' ten cents. Dey says I couldn't understan' de words in you mouf, but so long 's you can smile at me thru yo' tears I can understan' enough to feel sorry for you, en try to hep you out in de sunshine ergin. En I done saved up enough dimes to buy you dis li'l doll, too. (Takes up doll.) I knows how you been grievin' 'bout how dem hyenas cut yo' dollie's head off, en maybe yo mammy's too, en I hopes dis'n 'l hep you disremember all dem crool days. (Holds doll in arms.) You'se a pretty thing. Now go to sleep. (Rocks doll and may sing lullaby.)

ROSA—(L.) Whose baby is that, Polly?

POLLY—It am my li'l War Orphan's doll, Miss Rosa. I got to thinkin' 'bout dem li'l fellers en my ole heart got lonesome, en I jes' wanted to hol' somepin in my arms.

ROSA—Made you feel better, didn't it?

POLLY—Yes, it did, honey. Made me plumb happy.

ROSA—(Taking doll.) Let me see it.

POLLY—Be keerful en done drap it.

ROSA—I am not as clumsy as that, am I?

POLLY—No, honey, but you is powerful inexperienced.

ROSA—I know her little heart will be happy when she gets this. Let me mail it for you?

POLLY—En put dis li'l dress in, too.

ROSA—What a darling dress. Did you make it?

POLLY—I washed for Miss Tyler whilst she made it.

ROSA—I will fix them up for you. (Starts L.)

MRS. W.—(R.) Rosa, tell Bobby Mr. Martin and Mrs. Carey have arrived. (Ex. R.—L.)

POLLY—Is Miss Ethelind wid 'm?

MRS. W.—No.

POLLY—Now look a hear, Miss Mattie, deys somepin curious bout dis business, case Miss Ethelind done promised me a home wid her en Mr. Bobby, so long as I live.

MRS. W.—You don't understand, Polly. Run along

MAX—(Laying paper on table.) Here is the mortgage. I will give you the will when you get back to the city. Ethelind, your mother is guilty only in keeping the secret. The fault is all mine and I confess it.

ETH.—I am glad you are manly enough to acknowledge it. And I sincerely hope you will continue to be honest with yourself until you can appreciate the full meaning of the gold stars that twinkle from so many thousand American windows. If only you could do that Max, it would be easy for you to feel grateful to them, and to these millions of blue stars, (Draws curtain back, exposing service flag.) and by standing by them prove yourself a man and not a beast. I forgive you both. Goodby.

MAX—I shall try to redeem myself by making amends as far as possible. Goodby. (Going R.) I would like to speak to you, Dr. Brighton. (Ex. R.)

ETH.—My good friend, you are leaving me on the threshold of great happiness, and out of a heart full of love and appreciation I want to thank you.

DR. B.—I have done nothing but my duty to your father, to you and to a soldier; and I am very happy to know that in doing it I have made it possible for your father's dearest wish to become a reality. I hear Bobby coming now. Tell him I will be back in just a few minutes.

ETH.—(Smiling.) Don't hurry. Take time to smoke a cigar.

DR. B.—Sure. I understand. (Smiling and pointing finger.) Remember, now, he is wounded.

ETH.—I will be easy on him. (Ex. Dr. B.—R.)

BOBBY—(L. in uniform and walking cautiously.) Why, hello Ethelind. I did not expect to find you here.

ETH.—(Offering both hand.) You didn't? Well, I am here all right, and I welcome you home.

BOBBY—HOME?

ETH.—Yes, HOME. Your home and mine, Bobby dear, as long as we live.

BOBBY—I do not understand.

ETH.—(Leads him to chair, center.) Sit here and I will make you understand. (Bobby sits. Ethelind advances to front of the stage and addresses audience.) Now, good people, you run along home and leave me to convince this soldier that I am still "standing by." And in the future let us strive to show that we are not unmindful of the great debt of gratitude we owe to the boys who planted our victorious flag in the very vortex of the greatest carnage of all ages. They did their duty nobly. Now let us do ours, so that not one of them may have cause to say in his heart: (Slowly.)

"Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not."

End.

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